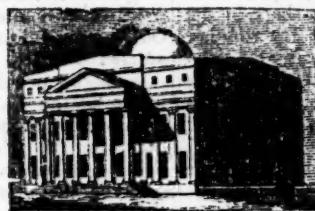


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Popular Education.

THE EDUCATION OF A FREE PEOPLE.

A DISCOURSE delivered before the American Institute of Instruction, by ROBERT RANTOUL, Jr., Esq., of Massachusetts.

"The end of the institution, maintenance and administration of government, is to secure the existence of the body politic; to protect it, and to furnish the individuals who compose it, with the power of enjoying, in safety and tranquility, their natural rights, and the blessings of life; and whenever these great objects are not obtained, the people have a right to alter the government, and to take measures necessary for their safety, prosperity and happiness."

The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts begins with these words. They are sufficiently explicit to express the American idea of the purpose of government; but a shorter definition occurs in the seventh article of the Bill of Rights. "Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity and happiness of the people." Of the entire correctness of this sentiment, fortunately, there is, among us, no difference of opinion.

The letter issued by the unanimous order of the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, dated September 17th, 1787, and bearing the signature of George Washington, President of the Convention, announces another fundamental principle, equally well established with the former. It is this:

"Individuals entering into society, must give up a share of liberty to preserve the rest. The magnitude of the sacrifice must depend, as well on situation and circumstance, as on the object to be obtained. It is at all times difficult to draw with precision, the line between those rights which must be surrendered, and those which may be reserved."

It is agreed then, on all hands, that the object of government is the common good, and that this object can never be accomplished without the mutual surrender of a share of liberty.

We hence deduce two perfect and unexceptionable tests, by which we may determine the

comparative degrees of excellence of all former or existing governments.

First; That government is best, which most effectually secures the common good, and provides for the protection, safety, prosperity and happiness of the people.

Second; That government is best, which works out these results with the least possible sacrifice of individual liberty.

No government ever did, or ever can, answer either of these conditions, except where the great mass of the people are well and highly educated.

Look, for a moment, at that rude form of government which exists among savages. Its objects are but very imperfectly secured, and yet this result, unsatisfactory as it is, must be purchased by an almost total sacrifice of individual liberty. There is no more arbitrary, irregular and capricious despotism in the world, than that of the chief of a horde of the most ignorant and brutalized savages. And yet what equivalent do these miserable creatures receive for this surrender of their rights? They suffer in unmitigated slavery: The complex arrangements by which civilized men provide for the security of the person, liberty, character and property, are not only out of their reach, but beyond their conception. Their very life they hold at the mercy of a tyrant. They have absolutely no guarantees, and with all the evils of despotism, they endure also most of the plagues of anarchy.

Among barbarians, there is to be found a class, small in numbers, but strong in the exclusive possession of knowledge, better informed, and more refined than the rest. These, influence and humanize the action of the government, even where its form continues to be a pure despotism. There are fewer gratuitous outrages. Its action becomes more regular and steady, and subject to fixed laws. However it may invade the rights or trample upon the happiness of the people for its own aggrandizement, it sternly suppresses the violence of others, protects the weak against all the strong, except itself, the strongest, and does justice between man and man, reserving to itself the monopoly of injustice.

But among civilized nations, intelligence being more widely diffused, a larger portion of mankind press forward, to have a share in the government of themselves, and to try whether they may not better provide for their own prosperity and happiness, and at the expense of a less sacrifice of individual liberty. Their number daily multiplies, and they press forward with efforts continually renewed.

The object of all effort is change. We labor to produce some modification of matter conducive to our own gratification, some improvement in the character, or conduct, or relations of other men, or some melioration of our own individual character or circumstances.

The consciousness of the ability to affect the course of events, to influence opinion, feeling, and action, and to exercise a larger share of control over the fortunes of ourselves and our fellows, is a pleasing consciousness. The desire to possess and employ this ability springs up in every breast, and can never be eradicated, though under right guidance, it can be subjected to the wisest and the holiest purposes. Often it has spread desolation over provinces and kingdoms; often it has gone forth upon its errand of mercy, unappalled by danger, unsubdued by suffering. For good, or for evil, as philanthropy, or ambition, it exists everywhere, and is forever active. The love of power is an instinct of our common nature. Developed in widely different forms, according to the various influences to which we are exposed, it is none the less a universal passion. The love of honor, and of official station, the love of fame, the thirst for knowledge, the craving after wealth, are some of the phases which this passion assumes. Obedient to its impulses, intellect and energy have ruled the world, and the world's history hereafter is to be determined by the disposition of this passion in the rising generation and their posterity.

Never was the love of power before so active as in the present age. It is the leaven with which the world ferments. Never before was there such a heaving of the whole mass. The signs are ominous of change; extensive, rapid, deep-reaching and irrevocable change. Millions are possessed with the determination, before confined to a few thousands, to make their will felt in the management of their common interests. The many choose to take their joint concerns out of the hands of the few, who have hitherto monopolized both the power, and the profit, as well as the glory of government, and it is to be settled whether a majority cannot administer its affairs more according to its own liking, and with greater ultimate benefit, by understanding them and directing them, than by intrusting them to a small minority, in whom, by the very trust, is created an interest adverse to the general good, an interest to fatten on the plunder so improvidently placed within its grasp. The blind and unconditional surrender by the multitude, of their fortunes, rights, and lives, to be sported with at the pleasure of their masters, seems to be drawing to an end in every civilized country.

In all rational calculations of advantage from this mighty change, the most momentous of the revolutions in their political condition that man-

kind have undergone, our own example is, and long must be, an essential element. A fact is worth more than a whole volume of speculations. One successful issue is better than a thousand untried theories.

A high, peculiar trust, devolves upon the people of the United States of America. The grand experiment of self-government is on trial here, for the whole world and for all time. While all mankind are their spectators, it behoves the actors to conduct with dignity. While the destiny of countless future generations may be vitally affected by the result, we have no right to neglect any disposable means of success. We are answerable, for the fate of free institutions in the present age, not merely for sixteen millions of men, but for the race. We are responsible, and posterity will hold us accountable, for the prospect of the cause of liberty after we have left the stage. If that bright futurity into which young hope looks forward be overclouded by our fault, how deep and just the condemnation that must fall upon us! But if the path of freedom be illuminated with the lustre which a faithful performance of our duty will shed over it, all that walk therein will call us blessed. Let us be but true to ourselves, and to our world-voiced vocation, and we shall win and wear the undying glory of the victory over ignorance, over vice, over misery, and over slavery. If this victory, by God's grace be once achieved, the great warfare is forever accomplished. The power of evil flies to the abyss, and plunges into genial and eternal darkness: Joy courses round the world with the tidings of his downfall, and the gratitude of redeemed millions hails his vanquishers, the guarantors of human happiness, the fathers of a new order of ages.

Upon us, as a people, rests the fulfilment of these splendid destinies. Upon our capacity for the improvement of advantages never before vouchsafed to any portion of the children of men, depends the issue of man's history. Universal education will determine this capacity. The refined product of that education, our literature, will every where communicate the results, and teach the practical lessons involved in our experience.

Governments represent the elements of power which exist in society previously to their formation. Physical force, intellectual supremacy, moral influence under different names, and the power of wealth, each has heretofore claimed its share in the control of the body politic. As one or the other of these ingredients predominates, the government assumes that mode of being and action which most naturally expresses, receives, and conveys the impulses of the several pre-existing active interests which created and sustain it; it may be military despotism, spiritual hierarchy, feudalism, plutocracy, or any mixed influence of two or more of these, as has most frequently happened.

These different simple forms of government, and various combinations compounded of them, have succeeded each other according to the laws that govern the distribution of knowledge and wealth, and so must forever continue to alternate, wherever the people have not advanced to that degree of social elevation requi-

site to the condition of fitness for the enjoyment of self-government. The crown, the sword, the mitre, and the money bag, have had their turns; and looking back through the obscure history of long extinguished freedom, we can but dimly discern, and that for a few short intervals, the appearance on the stage of any other power, until the breaking out of the American and French Revolutions.

Of late, the prominent element of power in society has been the influence of popular information acting through the medium of public opinion. This influence can be developed in a wholesome form only by the general, well advised, and thorough education of the whole people. Intelligence and virtue are the only safe foundation of Republics. This is a truism which has been so often repeated that we have almost ceased to feel its force. It is not the less important to remember, and to act as if we had not forgotten, that they constitute the only basis upon which free institutions can be established, administered, and perpetuated.

When I consider these truths, I am solemnly impressed with the undoubting conviction, that universal education may be justly deemed, the Palladium of our Civil Liberty and social Well-being. Our government is eminently a popular government. The people are sovereign, not only in theory but in practice. To their suffrages is the final appeal on every question, and this appeal is more frequent and more direct with each succeeding year.

Every man, therefore, among us, is called upon to pass his judgment upon the most complicated problems of political science. Ought he not to understand that which he must decide? And how can he understand these often abstruse and really difficult questions, without a knowledge of the particular facts in the case before him, and correct general information upon political economy, statistics, moral philosophy, history, the nature, attributes, and mode of operation of civil government, and above all, the nature of man? These are essential to intelligent legislation, and with us every voter is a legislator, for he chooses his representatives with express reference to their opinions upon a thousand matters which he has already settled in his own mind.

What then? Should any conscientious citizen shun the duties of his station? Should he abdicate his high prerogative? In vain would he seek to transfer to others the responsibility which devolves upon himself. He is an integral portion of the government of his country, and its offices he must discharge well or ill, for the common weal, or for the common woe, until death releases his obligations. Let him not then fold his arms, cry who is sufficient for these things, and with reckless indifference float just where the current may drift him. The public interests committed to his care are not of that trivial value, that he may listlessly let them pass, and not be greatly wanting to fulfil the allotted part which in the grand harmony of the universe was fitted for his performance: nor can he separate happiness from duty, nor satisfy his conscience till he has accomplished his mission of citizenship: neither is his own fate independent of the community, nor is he unaffected

ed by its fortunes and character. Innumerable ties connect him with society. Countless sympathies, growing out of every relation of life, sway him to and fro, so that the commonwealth suffers no detriment in which he is not harmed, nor can he rejoice in a blessing in which he does not participate. No private good can be secured without those same qualities of courage, independence, energy, and perseverance, which are requisite and sufficient for his task of public good.

Let him then rouse all his manhood for the conflict with indolence and ignorance: Let him qualify himself by assiduous application to the sources of knowledge, by ceaseless efforts to acquire and perfect habits of usefulness; by exhibiting a praiseworthy and profitable example, to act well the part of a good citizen, instead of asserting that honorable post in which it has pleased Providence to place him.

But he is not posted in a stationary location. He is ranked among an onward host. Every man, as a man, because of the nature of his being, has a right to expect, and is bound to attempt the advancement and improvement of his being. Every American citizen enjoys this hope, and incurs this obligation, with comparatively few impediments in the way of fulfilling them.

There is a peculiarity implanted by its Maker in the human mind, never to rest satisfied with its present condition. How high soever its present attainments, it presses on with an undiminished ardor for something higher and better: it forgets the things which are behind and looks forward with immortal aspirations to those which are before. For the wisest ends, God has given this desire to every human soul, and has made it unremitting and inextinguishable. Prosperity does not satiate it; disappointment does not damp it; through successes, through reverses it still burns on, warming with its healthy glow the heat that is chilled by adversity; urging to more vigorous action the engine of the intellect that has already surpassed competition. The cant of all ages, the cant of philosophy, as well as the cant of superstition, has often been levelled against this noblest of our instincts, but the united hostility of sophistry and fanaticism has always been unavailing. You might as well by your reasoning persuade man that he was made to grovel on four limbs, prone, like the beasts, instead of lifting his head proudly like the lord of the lower world, as to reduce him to the sordid contentment of the brutes who know nothing of the future, from that sublime and celestial impulse to ameliorate and to exalt his condition, to purify and to perfect his nature, which he was created a little lower than the angels, to entertain and to enjoy: You might as well think to blot out the sun from the heavens, as to quench the fire which the All-wise has kindled in the human breast. Through the whole species it is pervading as the breath of life, all-grasping as the intellect, undying as hope. The desire of bettering our condition has been arraigned as a criminal opposition to the ordinations of Providence. The infallible monitor within us answers, no, it is prompted by Providence. In vain has contentment, *inert, absolute contentment*, which should desire no change, been inculcated as the highest earthly

duty, from the pulpit and the press, by the orator, the poet, and the moralist. We cannot be *thus contented*, and it is well for us that we cannot.

It has been written, said, and sung, in a thousand plausible ways, that ignorance is better than knowledge, poverty better than wealth, listless apathy better than intense interest, inert idleness than industrious activity,—and that therefore it is foolish to endeavor to improve our condition, since all these *negative blessings* can be enjoyed without effort. The love of paradox has given some currency to this mischievous theory; much more, however, at the latter part of the last century than of late years; but in practice, men's instincts have generally proved too strong to be stifled by errors of speculation. To a philosopher who should labor to propagate any such doctrine, the reply of a plain working man would be, Sir, your conduct gives the lie to your professions. If you really feel that indifference and supine inaction constitute the only true felicity, why trouble yourself about arguments and systems, and take so much pains to convince others of their soundness? You have got together a great deal of learning to prove that ignorance is bliss, and work very hard to demonstrate that you prefer idleness to activity. The only position you establish thereby is, that your own mind loves to be in motion, that your nature will not suffer you to be at rest, in spite of your theory to the contrary,—but that, like all the rest of the world, you seek enjoyment by the exercise of your faculties.

If the desire of improving our condition—*the instinct of perfectibility*—cannot be suppressed, is it desirable that it should be confined to the narrowest possible limits, or should it be encouraged to enlarge itself, and take the widest scope opportunity offers it? Most decidedly the latter. It is this instinct which rouses us to action, which urging us on to benefit ourselves, impels us into courses which benefit others, and to which is to be attributed the progressively accelerated career of social, moral, and intellectual improvement.

Is the instinct of perfectibility to be less cultivated among any class of men, for instance, workingmen, than among others? Decidedly the contrary. It is this that makes men useful, makes them workingmen. A man never acts, except from long established habit, or instinctive impulse, without a motive; and this motive is always, in some form or other, the desire of increasing his happiness. Now let a man set about the pursuit of true happiness systematically, and follow it up perseveringly, and he becomes at once a genuine philanthropic workingman. And shall those whose plan of life is to subserve their own best interests by promoting the best interests of society, be postponed to those who drift down the current of time, without chart, compass, or attempt at a reckoning? It not only *must* not be, but cannot be. It is not only unjust, but impossible. We are all travelling onward towards perfection, and nothing can retard our progress but our own wickedness, or our own folly. In whatever respects circumstances ought to be different from what they are, let us recollect that it is the sovereign people, for the most part, who make the

circumstances. Whatever change is requisite in the institutions of society, or in the laws of the state,—we mould the institutions, we enact the laws. The power is in our hands to use it for our common good. The high places of the Republic are ours, to dispose of them as we will. Wealth and honor, respect and influence, the delight of advancing steadily from good to better, the glory of having done well, the proud consciousness of having deserved well, the solid satisfaction of success earned by merit, these are some of the rewards in prospect before us. In no time since the creation, in no nation under the sun, have the whole people beheld that open path before them, in which we are invited to walk. There are no obstacles in the way to deter us from entering it, but only such as operate as incentives to the resolute. Advancement in life courts every American citizen to accept it, and nothing can snatch it from his grasp but some unpardonable vice inherent in his own character.

The great object of our working class, and indeed of our whole people should be, and I doubt not will be, to place themselves upon a level with their opportunities, to fulfil their mission to furnish for the world a model nation, a living exhibition of the capacity of the human race for greatness, for goodness, and for happiness. To this end, the steady purpose of all our endeavors should be the promotion of national morality; and it should be our constant inquiry, what means may we employ, best suited to accomplish it.

The mightiest engine in the hands of the people is their faculty of self-cultivation. Their determined plan of action should be to enlighten the intellect, and thereby to enable themselves to know how to discern between good and evil. In this plan, with the advancement of every man by his own effort, in knowledge and virtue, should be included also the broadest platform for the general and thorough education of all the children of the community. To cultivate a correct moral taste, to elevate the standard of feeling, and to foster virtuous dispositions, are necessary concomitant parts of such instruction skilfully pursued.

Morality is the natural effect of a comprehensive intelligence. This general proposition may be easily substantiated.

That the general diffusion of knowledge will promote such an education as will develop and strengthen the religious principle, and confirm all the sanctions of virtue, is to my mind undeniable; but this proposition it forms no part of my present design to discuss. True it may be that some intellectual faculties are often highly cultivated with no better result than to render the possessor mightier to transgress the moral law; but this is not the inherent evil of intellectual strength; it is only the vice of its imperfection. Destroy the just balance of the faculties, and their action is of course perverted; but this fact no more argues that we ought not to use the intellect and strengthen it by use, than the fact that overworking a limb will produce bodily deformity, proves that energetic muscular exercise, judiciously varied, is not profitable for the healthy development of the physical system. Nor will any teacher, skilful

in the momentous duties which devolve upon him, neglect to establish habits in his pupils, by a course of training suited to that end, which will go far to carry them safely through the manifold temptations of after life; for indeed we are, for the most part, creatures of habit, from which there spring, unconsciously, a thousand acts, for every one that can be considered as the determination of careful, impartial, philosophical deliberation. But this subject also is too important to be dispatched in a parenthesis. It demands to be thoroughly treated by itself; and I therefore pass it over in the present discourse.

Beside the direct tendency, then, of intellectual education to promote that pure and undefiled religion which is the safest foundation for the most exalted morality, and omitting that all pervading influence of fixed habits of well doing, which every youth that leaves a New England school should feel through life, is there not in mere intelligence itself an originating cause, a creative impulse of a sound social morality; an impulse by no means all-sufficient alone, yet in its co-operative power with religion and habit, never to be overlooked or undervalued?

A man's character depends upon his practical opinions. For this we have the authority of an apostle, "*As a man thinketh so is he.*" But a man's practical opinions, so far as he is a reasonable and consistent being, must depend upon, and grow out of his theoretical opinions. So much so that we are expressly directed to judge of every man's faith by his works, since a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. And it cannot be otherwise, since, except from long established habit, where the motive influences us, if at all, so unconsciously to ourselves that we can hardly be certain of its existence, or from those instinctive impulses where the dictate of nature supplies the place of a motive, a man never acts without a motive, and according to the views he entertains of his own highest happiness, and of his relations with the world about him, will be the motives which operate on him, and which operating frequently and through long periods of time, will often essentially modify, not only his habits, but even the very instincts and propensities of his nature. The importance of this fundamental doctrine will justify for it a more attentive consideration. Let us examine then, what it is, as often as the intellect intervenes, that governs the conduct of men; what are the rules of morality; and, independently of religious considerations, what other inducements, superadded to the teachings of his nature and the promptings of his conscience, what inducements addressed to him through the medium of the intellect, has every man to be moral.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am not about to assert, or to intimate, that we should depend upon intellectual education to form the moral sense, and to perfect the moral character. I hold directly the reverse. My object in this investigation is to refute that calumny against human nature and blasphemy against God's Providence, that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion and Virtue, by showing that intellectual education, so far as it affects the mor-

al character, cannot but foster and confirm all holy influences.

Honesty, veracity, honor, benevolence, love, patriotism, are not inductions from facts, or corollaries of any theory, or conclusions originally wrought out by any process of reasoning; but where these, and the other virtues that cluster round them spring up from pure and abiding principles planted in the heart, all facts, all theory that is not falsehood, all reasoning that is not sophistry, sustain their vigorous growth. The dark, dank vapours of ignorance would chill and blight them, but the cheerful sun of knowledge can only impart warmth, and health, and life to that goodness which, because it is by the constitution of nature in exact harmony with all truth, therefore loves the truth, and comes gladly to its light.

What is it—whenever an appeal is made to the intellect to decide the question of interest—what is it that governs the conduct of men? Mankind are by the constitution of their nature capable of deriving happiness from many different sources. They have instincts which desire to be gratified, and in the gratification of which they experience a vast variety of enjoyments. These instincts were designed by their Maker to be gratified, and it is only in the properly adjusted gratification of these capacities that happiness consists; yet the whole history of the world presents us with the melancholy spectacle of mankind making themselves, and making each other, miserable by the unwise, indiscriminate and unrestrained gratification of their instincts. The limits of healthy and rational indulgence are every where determined in the order of nature; and he who may pass beyond them in search of some good which nature intended not for him, although he may grasp some fleeting pleasure, will find, when perhaps he least expected it, a latent pain provided by the benevolent Author of the universe, to teach the erring mortal a bitter, though wholesome lesson of forbearance and moderation. These limits exist in the dispositions and wants of other men, in the constitution of things about us, and in our own constitution. By confining all our desires within these limits we shall never waste our strength in ineffectual struggles after unattainable good; by cultivating and gratifying all our instincts up to these limits, we shall obtain the highest amount of happiness of which our nature is capable. We cannot satisfy any of our capacities for happiness without employing the means which nature affords us. We can create nothing, and we can modify her creations only by directing operations which she herself performs. We must take advantage of her aid, for without her we can do nothing. She however furnishes with a bountiful hand. We have only to ask with an intelligent faith, and we shall receive. All the works of God seem suited for the sustenance, the delight, and the perfection of man. His creation is one vast magazine of blessings, into which whosoever will abandon all preconceived prejudice, all false philosophy, and all vain conceits, and come to nature humbly and inquiringly as a little child, desiring to be taught of her, may enter in and enjoy. The mineral, the vegetable and the animal kingdoms are filled with innumerable cor-

respondences, fitted to meet the requirements of our own constitution. We need only comply with the conditions to be recipients of the benefits they are intended to confer. Our fellow beings are related to us by common wants to be relieved, common desires to be satisfied, common dangers to be averted, common sorrows to be comforted, common weaknesses to be assisted, and common hopes, rewards and consolations to be enjoyed together. In all these, and in all their other relations, no less numerous than their powers of receiving or imparting advantage or injury, mankind are full of sympathies, and in these sympathies there is a rich and inexhaustible mine of the noblest and most exalted pleasures. But more than all, in the structure of our own souls provision is made for their highest well-being, and for the full fruition of a more exquisite beatitude than any external good can bestow upon us. Our Maker has not left us to be the sport of time, and place, and chance, and circumstance; within ourselves are the fountains, pure and perennial, of living water, springing up to everlasting joy, whereof whosoever drinks need thirst for no other. Thus it is that in the properties of external things, in the constitution of our fellow-creatures, and last and chieftest in our own breasts, we are to search for the sources of all the happiness our nature is capable of experiencing.

Here then we arrive at a great truth—

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER. For unless we know and understand the properties of matter, the dispositions of men, and our own faculties; in short unless we are acquainted with the laws, moral and physical, by which we, and the world we live in, are governed, how can we take advantage of those laws—how can we employ our faculties, or derive any profit from the excellent qualities of the good things afforded for our use? We shall be like a blind man in a gallery of choice pictures, or like one destitute of hearing at an oratorio of some great master: the eyes of our understanding are not enlightened to distinguish between good and evil, our ears are not attuned to the harmony of nature. But he who knows the properties of things, their mutual dependencies and their fixed laws, knows the springs by which all the machinery of the world may be set in motion. He is indeed the Lord of the creation. Whatever he wills he does, for he knows where to find, and how to command the means of doing it. Out of seeming evil he produces real good, and in this he imitates him in whose image he was created. Those agents of destruction, most terrible to uneducated man, become willing ministers of his purposes. The unconquerable elements obey him. The ocean bears his treasures on its bosom: the winds waft them: the waterfall turns the wheels of his engines, fire subdues for him the hardness of the most obdurate substances, and steam, like some mighty genius of Oriental Romance, confined by his potent spell, toils on for him without sleep, without rest, without food, and enables a single mind to exert productive energies, which, without its aid, would require the labors of ten thousand hands. He learns the habits and the instincts of the lower animals, and subjects them all to his empire. He modifies their original characters,

and makes useful servants of those which, untamed, were unserviceable or even noxious. He studies and comprehends his fellow-men, makes their passions subservient to his own, makes his interests coincide with theirs, enlists their sympathies in a common cause with his, and makes himself happy by promoting the general welfare and happiness. He looks within himself, and discovers that he possesses, independently of all external help, the means of a calm contentment, which the world can neither give nor take away. Upon this basis he rests, here he founds his confidence, which no tempests of misfortune can shake, no torrent of adversity can tear from him. By honesty, by honor, by avoiding every act and word that will bring after it remorse or shame, by meditating upon and following after whatsoever things are lovely and of good report, he preserves and cultivates his own self-respect. By communion with God and with his own thoughts, he purifies, exalts and enlarges his faculties and becomes truly wise, saving himself from every vice and from every misery which is the result and consequence of vice. Those lesser afflictions which still trouble him, because they are part of the lot of humanity, compared to those from which he escapes, are but the small dust in the balance. Whatever the world may think of him, however the fortune of the world goes with him, he is master of himself and his fate, he has in his own breast all the elements of a tranquil felicity. How different is the condition of that man who is still in his pristine state of ignorance! Nature has no charms for him, no blessings in store for him; he sees no beauty, he perceives no harmony; all sweet influences are lost upon him, all the propitious intentions of nature are frustrated by him. He pursues phantoms that only mock him, and where his expectations are highest, his disappointments are most grievous. He lives in a continual struggle with the eternal order which he does not understand, and is always defeated, because he always attempts what it is impossible for him to perform. Most clearly then, in the most extended sense, knowledge is power, and without it we have no other power, we are like children exposed in a desert; there is nothing on which we can place reliance, or to which we can look for assistance; we are isolated and helpless.

We can now answer the question, in all calculations of interest, what it is that governs the conduct of men. It is the desire which every one has of increasing his portion of happiness: and according as his views of the course to be pursued are more or less correct, his exertions will be well or ill directed. If he sets his own interest in opposition to the true interest of the world at large, he will fail of accomplishing his object, and, in proportion to the extent of his influence, he will occasion injury to others. If he makes his happiness consist in that which can be pursued without diminishing the enjoyments of others, if he violates no law of physical or moral nature, if while he prospers in his own enterprises he thereby contributes to the well-being of his fellow-creatures, he will encounter no antagonist principle, he will make auxiliary to his purpose all those principles in

conformity to which he acts, and he must succeed in his design so sure as the laws of nature are constant in their operation.

[Concluded in our next.]

Reports of County Superintendents.

PUTNAM COUNTY.

Hon. N. S. BENTON, *Supt. Common Schools.* Sir—Together with the abstracts and statistical information required of me by the department, I beg leave to present the following general report, relative to the condition of the common schools in Putnam County :

Abstract of the reports of town superintendents. The county of Putnam is divided into six towns, which are also divided into forty-six whole school districts, and forty-one parts of districts. The no. of whole districts from which the necessary reports have been received, is forty-four, and the no. of parts of districts thus reported, is thirty-seven. These schools have been in operation on an average during the past year, a little over eight months, and the no. of pupils having received instruction in the same, is 3301. The no. of children residing in the said districts over five and under sixteen years of age, is 3509, and the whole amount of money expended by said districts in the employment of teachers, is \$6301.88. There are also twelve unincorporated select or private schools in which one hundred eighty-two pupils have received instruction.

Condition of the schools.—It is with no small degree of pleasure that I am enabled to report favorably concerning the condition of the common schools in the county of Putnam. Having made the tour of my county twice since my last report, I will proceed to give briefly the result of my observation. In the passage of the law creating the office of county superintendent, it was generally looked upon by the most of the inhabitants as useless and altogether unnecessary, consequently burdening the county with a tax from which they were to receive no immediate benefit. Four years having nearly elapsed since the passage of the law, a considerable change in the feelings of the inhabitants has become manifest: many look to it now as a source from whence the most favorable results may be anticipated. The passage of the law abolishing the offices of commissioner and inspector of common schools, was generally received with a good deal of satisfaction, inasmuch as it tends to lighten the burthen of taxation for the support of school offices. Our present beautiful system of school supervision is becoming the admiration of many of our sister States, and well it may, for among them all cannot be found a system so regular in its operations, so simple in its structure, possessing so many advantages, and attended with so few defects. In visiting the schools it is my general practice to notify the town superintendent of my intention to visit the schools in his town, wishing him to accompany me, and also give notice to the proprietors and teachers of the time when we will visit their respective schools. In this manner I have generally secured the attendance of several of the proprietors, who together with

the town superintendent render the task of inspection very pleasing. It is not always that the company of the town superintendent can be obtained, (some of them having business of such a nature that it is not possible for them to leave,) when this is the case I generally send word to the districts as opportunity offers, and am generally sure to obtain the attendance of some few of the inhabitants. In the examination of the schools, it is my usual practice, to let the teacher pursue his regular method of instruction; after going through with the general routine, to review the pupils in their respective studies, asking questions myself as opportunity offers or requesting the town superintendent to do the same. By this manner I am enabled not only to judge of the progress of the pupils, but also to form a very correct idea of the general management of the teacher, and to note with due accuracy, the state of feeling existing between teacher and pupil. Wherever I find any defect existing, either in the mode of imparting instruction, or in the government of the school, I generally seek a private interview with the teacher, pointing out such defect and prescribing a remedy. By pursuing this course the good will of the teacher is generally secured, while the pupils are not led to suspect any thing wrong, on the part of their instructor. While the teacher has charge of the school great precaution should be used not only by superintendents, but by proprietors, of the manner in which they speak of their teacher; unless something commendable can be said it is far better to be silent, in order that the high office of instructor, be not disgraced by those who should be foremost in rendering it elevated. If the teacher be found incompetent to discharge the duties assigned him as an instructor or of the young, let him be at once discharged; the sooner the separation between him and his school, the better certainly for the district. In Putnam as in many other counties I find the progress of many of the schools measurably retarded, by the ill attendance of the pupils, thereby rendering the classification of the scholars with any degree of propriety, next to an impossibility. It is a lamentable fact that in many of the schools not half the pupils attend regularly and even of those that do attend not a few are a half hour behind the time of commencement. This tardiness in the pupils, might be materially remedied by the teacher, either by striving to stimulate the scholars, or setting the matter in its true light before the parents of such children, or by some other inventive means, of which a teacher should never be wanting.

Another very serious obstacle in the way of classification, is the want of uniformity in text books; and this want of uniformity must continue to exist, until some different arrangement is made in procuring text books for our common schools. I would therefore here beg leave to offer one suggestion on this subject, viz., that after the proprietors of the several school districts have obtained a sufficient number of books to constitute a good library, and made purchase of all necessary school apparatus, (this matter to be determined by the town or county superintendent,) the town superinten-

dent be authorized to expend the amount of money apportioned to such district or districts, in procuring text books, to be used in the schools of the same—these books to be the property of the district for which such money may have been expended. Something of this kind I feel confident would give satisfaction in my section of the state. In Oct. last the town superintendents and myself in convention, adopted a set of text books for the common schools of this county, (aiming at entire uniformity,) in the introduction of which we make but little progress. In making such selection, we aimed at the general interest of the schools, selecting such books as were already used by many of the districts, if not found too full of error, and introducing such new ones as we believed would best promote the interest of the young learner; yet after all our efforts, some parents complain bitterly about the expense consequent upon such a change, and a few of the teachers would have preferred the works of some favorite author of theirs, to those already selected. Such barriers as these will continue to be thrown in the way of uniformity, consequently preventing thorough classification, so long as the present method of introducing school books is continued. This is not by any means the universal feeling of the inhabitants of Putnam county, for in some few sections of it a warm, deep and heartfelt interest is manifested with regard to the education of the rising generation, and I begin to look forward to the time when this interest shall not only be prevalent here, but in every other section of our wide spread country. I would gladly hail the time, when ignorance, with all her attendants, shall have taken her flight from this peaceful country, and our whole people become as renowned for moral, intellectual and physical culture, as they have been hitherto for peace and prosperity. When we look at the amount of crime that is daily perpetrated throughout our land, and consider that ignorance, either moral or intellectual, is the cause, what vast stimulants have we to exertion, placed as we are over the supervision of the education of the youth of our State. I cannot but feel for one that much is required at my hands.

Teachers.—The number of male teachers in the winter schools was forty-two, and the number of female teachers seven; in the summer schools, there were seventeen male and thirty-five female teachers. It is a general practice with many of our districts, to employ females during the summer season, as their compensation is less, and they being equally well calculated to take charge of the small scholars that at that season generally fill our schools. The teachers of this county, are in general very well calculated for the business of instructing, but until this business will sufficiently compensate those who enter into it, so that they can make it a profession on which they may rely for support, rather than a mere temporary employment, our common schools will never arrive to that degree of perfection which our warmest feelings would naturally anticipate. Since my last Report I have granted County License to four females, who, I trust, will be an honor to the profession where ever they may

go, and to three young men of equal merit. I have also granted town license to three female and two male teachers. I have generally tried to create a spirit of emulation among teachers under my charge, stating that they would find me ever ready to promote them when I could do it consistent with my duty. This inducement held out has had a very desirable effect.

School Houses.—The no. of school houses visited by me during the year reported is sixty-one, of these fifty-six are of framed wood, four of brick and one of logs.

The no. in good repair is twenty-three, the no. in ordinary repair is twenty-one, and the no. wholly unfit to be used as places for instruction is seventeen. Within the past year some considerable improvement has been made in the general appearance of our school-houses; a few of the old ones have been repaired, two or three new ones have been erected and some three or four more in contemplation. I would in particular notice the inhabitants of the village of Carmel who have lately erected a very neat school-house that adds much to the appearance of the place and will, when its fixtures are completed, speak much to the credit of those enterprising villagers.

There are however some few wealthy sections of our county where the inhabitants have neglected and still continue to neglect doing anything to render the situation of their children while at school comfortable. Though frozen feet sickness, spinal affections, and the like consequences to their children be the result of such negligence, they appear still to turn a deaf ear to this matter let what will follow. Not by any means would I have you led to suppose that the inhabitants of these districts are wanting in parental kindness or tenderness towards their children, for I know of no people that appear to have a greater regard for the welfare of their children, neither could children wish for more indulgent parents, or for a greater degree of kindness or tenderness to be bestowed upon them, except in this one particular, entire disregard paid to their comfort while at school.

School District Libraries.—The no. of volumes in the several district libraries of this county, according to the reports of the town superintendents, amount to seven thousand two hundred ninety-one. These libraries I find in very good order with a few exceptions; many of them appear to be but little used, and I regret to say that it is rather questionable whether they answer the expectations intended; be that as it may, it is to be hoped that a population will soon arise who will appreciate the rich stores of knowledge contained in them. The average circulation in the winter season is about one fifteenth, and in the summer season not more than one thirtieth part of the whole number. Very many of the districts have expended their library money during the past year for maps, globes, black-boards, &c.

I would respectfully call the attention of the department to the dissatisfaction arising in many sections of this county in consequence of the expense of postage and binding of the school journal; one of the most valuable publications of the day: If something could be done

to silence this dissatisfaction it would greatly oblige your humble servant.

Yours respectfully,
MORGAN HORTON.

County Superintendent of Putnam.
Southast, Oct. 1st, 1845.

KINGS COUNTY.

To the Hon. N. S. BENTON, State Superintendent of Common Schools.

I herewith transmit to the Department the annual statistical information required of me, as county superintendent.

In addition to the statistics, I take advantage of this the last report I shall have the honor to present—to suggest a few ideas in regard to school matters in this county—and first, in reference to the city of Brooklyn. The prosperity of the schools of that city would be, in my opinion, greatly promoted, were there a school officer whose whole time could be devoted to their supervision. The number of children annually taught therein, the amount of money expended in and about them, seem to require it. The Board of Education of that city deserve great credit for the improvement which the schools have exhibited in every respect since its organization, but that Board, composed as it is of thirty-two members, is too large a body for each one to feel a sufficient share of responsibility. Its size prevents its acting as efficiently as is desirable. Could an alteration of the law be effected, by which the secretary of the Board should be city superintendent, and receive a salary sufficient to allow of his whole time being devoted to the Public schools of the city, I can conceive of nothing more conducive to the interests of the rising generation:

Second, In reference to the county generally. The rapid increase of population in this county, has called for an increase in the number of districts. One new one has been organized since my last report, and others are in contemplation.

A great desire on the part of many inhabitants of this county has been expressed, for a general law authorising the inhabitants of each town to determine by vote at the annual town meetings, whether their schools shall be *district* or *free* schools. This desire has arisen in a great measure from the greatly increasing population of several of the towns, and the expense of carrying out the present provisions of the law in relation to rate bills. With one or two exceptions, that part of the law is in this county, a dead letter. The influence of the free school system of Brooklyn and Williamsburgh has rapidly extended, and has had much effect in strengthening the desire I have above alluded to. The practical manner in which poor children are generally taught in the county, is for the teacher to receive so much per quarter for those who can pay—he agreeing to teach all the poor children, without pay.

In closing this report, I cannot forego the pleasure of bearing my testimony to the very general excellence of the teachers of this county. Suggestions for the improvement of the schools have been cheerfully carried into effect, and an increased zeal in the discharge of their duties has been generally manifested.

My personal intercourse with all concerned in the Common School education of the youth of this county, has been exceedingly pleasant and friendly during my whole official term, and it is a source of regret that my private business required that degree of attention which prevented the possibility of my continuance in the office for another term.

Without any disparagement to the other teachers of this county, I respectfully recommend for State certificates, Josiah Reeve, teacher of No. 1, Williamsburgh, Charles W. Hammond, " 1, Bushwick, Amos Woodman, " " 2, Flatbush.

I have the honor to remain

very respectfully,

SAM'L. E. JOHNSON,
County supt. of Com. Schools for Kings Co.
Oct. 1, 1845.

DUTY AND HAPPINESS.

"Mere transient enjoyment is not to be taken into the account of happiness for an intellectual and immortal being. That man, alone, can be called happy, who is at peace with his own heart and with his Maker."

"The object of a good and wise man in this transitory state of existence, should be to fit himself for a better, by controlling the unworthy propensities of his nature, and improving all its better aspirations—to do his duty, first to his family, then to his neighbors, lastly to his country and his kind—to promote the welfare and happiness of those who are in any degree dependent upon him, or whom he has the means of assisting, and never wantonly to injure the meanest thing that lives—to encourage, as far as he may have the power, whatever is useful and ornamental in society, whatever tends to refine and elevate humanity—to store his mind with such knowledge as it is fitted to receive, and he is able to attain—and so to employ the talents committed to his charge, that when the account is required he may hope to have his stewardship approved. It should not seem difficult to do this; for nothing can be more evident than that men are and must be happy in proportion as their lives are conformed to such a scheme of divine philosophy."—[Robert Southey.]

"No man was ever yet deeply convinced of any momentous truth, without feeling in himself the power, as well as the desire, of communicating it." "The perilous abuse of that feeling by enthusiasts and fanatics, leads to an error in the opposite extreme. We sacrifice too much to prudence; and in fear of incurring the danger or the reproach of enthusiasm, too often we stifle the holiest impulses of the understanding and the heart."

"Our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft might win
By fearing to attempt."—[Ib.]

"As surely as God is good, so surely there is no such thing as necessary evil. For by the religious mind, sickness and pain and death, are not to be accounted evils. Moral evils are of our own making, and undoubtedly the greater part of them may be prevented."—[Ib.]

District School Journal.

S. S. RANDALL, EDITOR.

ALBANY, SEPTEMBER, 1846.

THE WRITING AND PRINTING REFORMA-
TION.

We have not been inattentive observers of the rapid progress, within a few years past, not only in Europe but in our own country, and particularly in New-England and New-York, of the modern science of PHONOGRAPHY, including Phonetyping, and its written correlative. We believe that science in its fundamental principles, to be sound and its general adoption, at no very distant day, in our elementary and more advanced institutions of learning, probable if not certain. The time has gone by, never we trust, to return, when the enlightened and thinking portion of community are prepared to reject any proposition brought before them by intelligent and practical men, simply because it implies an innovation upon established habits of thought or action. The generation which has witnessed the wonderful and almost miraculous results which have been achieved in the domains of Astronomy, Geology and Chemistry—which within the last few years has seen the pervading and imponderable elements of heat and light and electricity, literally harnessed to the cars of business and commerce, and pleasure—conveying and transmitting within a second of time, the messengers of thought to the remotest regions—and transferring the ever varying lineaments of the “human face divine,” and of the diversified scenery of the material world to permanent tablets for the inspection of future ages—the generation which has witnessed these magnificent results, will scarcely attempt summarily, and *ex cathedra*, to set bounds to the progress of human knowledge, or to say to the efforts of the human mind, in any direction, “Hitherto shalt thou go and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.”

No person who has perused the very able exposition of Mr. BOYLE, contained in our last number on this subject of the orthography and orthoepy of our language, can, we think, fail to perceive that the advocates of reform in this important branch of science, are possessed of strong weapons both in point of incontrovertible facts and cogent—we had almost said conclusive reasons, for the defence of the ground they have assumed. The absurdities, anomalies and senseless distinctions where no substantial differences are discoverable, which have crept into our language, and gained an apparently firm foothold there, seem almost incredible when fairly brought before the mind: and we apprehend it would be difficult to find any valid reason—scarcely any show of reason—for their perpetuation or continu-

ance. A thorough and radical reform in this respect will, undoubtedly be attended with some present *inconvenience*: but this is an objection which it is obvious may be urged with equal force and pertinency, against the reformation of any evil of long standing in the physical, intellectual or moral world. The simple answer to it is, if the existence and extent of the evil be conceded, no argument growing out of mere *convenience* in its retention, should be allowed a moment's weight. Let us assume the burden, greater or less, of the temporary inconvenience which its extinction may infer; and let our *children* and future generations participate in the advantages thereby secured.

We cannot resist the impression that the impulse which has been given to this very desirable reform by MR. PITMAN in England, and by Messrs ANDREWS, BOYLE, COMSTOCK and others in this country, is destined at no very remote period to effect the object its advocates have in view; and we feel no hesitation in recommending the introduction and prosecution of this interesting and useful study, in our common schools. With a zeal and disinterestedness which does him credit, MR. BOYLE has tendered a course of gratuitous instruction in this science to the pupils of the State Normal and Experimental School in this city, and to as many of the teachers throughout the State generally as choose to avail themselves of his liberal offer during and subsequent to the session of the Teachers Convention at Utica. We trust the offer will be received in the generous and devoted spirit with which it has been made: and that those intending to devote themselves to the business of teaching, as a profession, will investigate the claims which this new science puts forth—and if they are satisfied of its soundness, utility and practical importance, will diffuse a knowledge of its principles wherever they may be called upon to labor.

☞ We are compelled to draw liberally upon the patience of our numerous correspondents, many of whom we are aware, must feel inclined to charge us with an unwarrantable neglect of their favors. Our paper uniformly goes to press on the 15th of the month preceding its date, in order to enable us to reach every post office in the Union to which it is sent, by the first of the succeeding month; consequently we are under the necessity of preparing the matter to be inserted nearly a month in advance—while communications intended for insertion frequently reach us long after our actual publication, and must necessarily be deferred until a period when perhaps they are entirely inapplicable.

THE TIoga COUNTY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION met at the district school house in the village of Owego, on Saturday the 27th ult.

In the absence of the president, the association was called to order by B. WALLERS, Esq., one of

the vice-presidents. JAMES S. GRIFFING, officiating as secretary.

A committee consisting of CHARLES R. COBURN, A. C. STEDMAN and ROYAL BARBER was appointed to report business for the action of the association.

The Association then listened to a very able address from SOLOMON GILES, Esq., of Owego. He dwelt particularly upon the responsibilities of teachers, and argued this responsibility from the great value of the materials upon which they bestow their labor, the immortal mind.

After the address the committee reported the following resolutions which were passed.

1. *Resolved*, That there be a committee appointed composed of one teacher from each town in the county, to assist the county superintendent in procuring lecturers, and teachers for the next session of the teachers' institute, and in making such other arrangements as they may deem expedient; C. R. Coburn, R. Barber, E. Stevens, P. W. Hopkins, C. H. Cole, W. H. King, A. Ball, G. S. Clark and Dr. Hyde, were appointed as members of said committee.

2. *Resolved*, That there be committees of five appointed, to make reports to be presented at the fall session of the institute upon the following subjects:

The best method of teaching Mathematics, of which Charles R. Coburn, was appointed chairman. The best method of teaching the English language, Dr. Elijah Powell, Chairman. The best method of teaching Geography and History, William H. King, chairman. The best method of teaching the Natural Sciences, Andrew Coburn, chairman. The propriety of introducing the study of Physiology into our common schools, Dr. Hardy, chairman. The propriety of making teaching a Profession, Benjamin Wallers Esq., chairman.

The following resolutions were offered by A. Coburn, and unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That it is the duty of teachers to use every means in their power, to induce the pupils to read the books in the district libraries, and when the library is not kept in the school house, to accompany them to it, and advise and direct them in relation to what books are proper for them to read.

Resolved, That the elevation of the profession of teaching, and the best interests of the common schools, demand that town and county superintendents be careful how they grant certificates to those not qualified to teach.

These resolutions called out an animated discussion, in which the county superintendent, Mr. COLE, Dr. HARDY, A. C. STEDMAN, A. COBURN, R. BARBER, and C. R. COBURN, participated.

Dr. E. POWELL, Co. Supt. A. Coburn, A. C. Stedman, A. S. Kelley, Dr. Hardy, E. H. Crane, James Griffing, C. R. Coburn and Misses L. F. Payson and C. D. Hill, were appointed delegates to the State Association at Utica.

ANNUAL EXAMINATION OF THE NEW-YORK INSTITUTION FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB.

The examination of this Institution took place on Tuesday and Wednesday, July 7th and 8th, and was conducted on the part of the State by J. WATSON WILLIAMS, Esq., of Utica, who had been requested by the Secretary of State, Hon. N. S. BENTON, to assist him on this occasion, and on the part of the board of directors, by Messrs. P. M. WETMORE, H. E. DAVIES and FRANCIS HALL, the committee of the board. To the regret of all the Secretary of State was himself necessarily detained by official business, so that he could not be present, but the ability and deep interest manifested by Mr. WILLIAMS, proved him to be a worthy substitute, and the results of his patient and protracted investigations, which will be given in his report, may be relied on for their correctness and impartiality.

Eleven classes were examined, containing in all two hundred pupils, male and female, under the charge of eleven instructors, viz. three deaf-mute Teachers, seven Professors and the President of the Institution, Mr. H. P. PEET.

On Wednesday afternoon the board of directors and a large number of the friends of the institution witnessed with great satisfaction the exercises of the graduating class, after which certificates were given to those pupils who had been members of the Institution for five years, and diplomas to nine who had honorably completed a full course of seven years.

Verbal reports on the examination were made by the chairman of the committee and by the State visitor, who also delivered an appropriate address to the pupils, which was translated, as it was spoken, into the language of signs. The reports of both concurred in expressing the highest gratification in the examination of the various departments of the Institution, and also in commending it to the continued and liberal patronage of the State, and warm sympathy of the friends of humanity.

In another column will be found an excellent article translated from the French, by Professor CARY of this Institution, in reference to the preliminary instruction of this interesting class of our fellow beings prior to their admission into public seminaries of instruction. We commend its perusal to our readers generally, and especially to those who have in charge the early education of these unfortunate children.

We avail ourselves of this occasion also to state for the information of all concerned, that the Deaf and Dumb children of indigent parents will be selected for education and support in the New-York Institution, for the term of five years, in all cases, where the certificates of the overseers or Superintendents of the Poor of the town or county in which they reside, shall be forwarded to the Su

perintendent of common schools, stating that such child is between the age of twelve and twenty-five,—specifying such age—is free from all physical or mental defects other than deafness—and that the parents are unable to educate and support such child at the Institution. If they are unable to furnish clothing, that fact should also be stated, in which case it will be furnished at the Institution, at the expense of the County from which the pupil is taken. The only expense to which parents, in such cases, can be subjected, is that of conveyance to and from New-York, and suitable clothing on the admission of the pupil.

CONTRACTS WITH TEACHERS.

"Every contract made by Trustees with a Teacher in our Common Schools, necessarily includes the condition, that the agreement cannot be binding upon them for a longer period than the teacher may hold a certificate of qualification. I do not mean by this that Trustees cannot, with a full knowledge of all the facts in regard to a want of license, make a contract with an unlicensed teacher, which will bind them personally: but I do aver that this Department cannot, in the exercise of its rightful powers and jurisdiction, be called upon to enforce a performance of any such contract." *Per BENTON Supt. on Appeal, July 13, 1846.*

APPENDAGES, APPARATUS, &c.

No portion of the *library money* of a district can under any circumstances be appropriated to the purchase of a *Clock*, under the denomination of "scientific apparatus for the use of the school;" but the inhabitant's may legally vote a *tax* for such purchase as a suitable and proper *appendage* to the School house—*Per BENTON, Superintendent et parte July 13, 1846.*

As our paper for the present month will probably reach every section of the State, prior to the time specified in the annexed notice, we would earnestly request the attention of all interested, in the important subject to which it relates.

The New-York State Teacher's Association will hold its first Anniversary in the city of Utica, on the third Wednesday (nineteenth day) of August, 1846. The Session will continue at least two days, during which time reports will be submitted on several subjects closely connected with the great cause of Popular Education. For the purpose of securing able reports, subjects were assigned to Special Committees by the Executive Board soon after the organization of the society in August last. The means of elevating the Teacher's Profession, and other questions of great importance it is expected, will be fully and ably discussed.

Able Lecturers have been engaged, and ample arrangements made for a large and profitable meeting of the practical Teachers of this State. Teachers and friends of education throughout this and other States, are most cordially invited to attend and participate in the duties and pleasure of this our first meeting as a State Association of Teachers.

By Order of the Pres't.

THE CONVENTION—FREE SCHOOLS.

It will be perceived by the following report of the committee on education and common schools, of the constitutional convention now in session in this city, that the **FREE SCHOOL SYSTEM** is proposed by them to be incorporated into the fundamental law of the State; and that the question of its adoption be submitted, separately, to the consideration of the people. We congratulate the friends of free education throughout the State, on this gratifying result; and we earnestly indulge the hope that the convention will sanction by a strong vote the enlightened principle adopted by the committee. As to its final adoption by an overwhelming majority of the People, on its presentation to them, disconnected from all other questions of policy or expediency, we cannot permit ourselves to entertain a doubt. On this point, the public sentiment, so far as our knowledge and information extend is strongly in favor of such an extension of the existing provisions of our common school system as shall embrace every child in the State. Inability to meet a heavy rate bill, at the expiration of each school term, must no longer be made the pretence for a virtual exclusion from the benefits of education, of hundreds and thousands of the children of indigent parents.

New-York in this respect cannot longer afford to be behind her Sister State of Massachusetts, where the Free School principle has been thoroughly tested.

"Our Schools" observes the Hon. Horace Mann in his Seventh Annual Report, as secretary of the Massachusetts board of education "are perfectly free. A child would be as much astonished at being asked to pay any sum, however small, for attending our common schools, as he would be if payment were demanded of him for walking in the public streets, for breathing the common air, or enjoying the warmth of the unappropriable sun. Massachusetts has the honor of establishing the first system of Free Schools in the world; and she projected a plan so elastic and expansive, in regard to the course of studies and the thoroughness of instruction, that it may be enlarged and perfected to meet any new wants of her citizens, to the end of time. Our system, too, is one and the same for both rich and poor; for as all human beings, in regard to their natural rights, stand up-

on a footing of equality before God, so, in this respect, the human has been copied from the divine plan of government, by placing all citizens on the same footing of equality before the law of the land."

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, JULY 22, 1846.

Mr. NICOLL, from the standing committee on education, &c., submitted the following :

ARTICLE.

§ 1. *The proceeds of all lands belonging to this state, except such parts thereof as may be reserved or appropriated to public use or ceded to the United States, which shall hereafter be sold or disposed of, together with the fund denominated the Common School fund, and all moneys heretofore appropriated by law to the use and benefit of the said fund shall be and remain a perpetual fund, the interest of which shall be inviolably appropriated and applied to the support of Common Schools throughout this State.*

§ 2. It shall be the duty of the legislature to pass such laws as may be necessary to keep at all times securely invested and to preserve from loss or waste all moneys arising from the sales of the said lands in the said first section mentioned, and all moneys now belonging or which hereafter may belong to the said common school fund.

§ 3. The revenues accruing from the proportional share of the moneys of the United States received on deposit with this state upon the terms specified in an act of Congress of the United States entitled "An act to regulate the deposits of the public money, approved the 23d of June, 1836," after retaining so much thereof as may from time to time be necessary to make good any deficiency in the principal, shall hereafter be inviolably applied to the purposes of common school education, subject to the limitations and restrictions in the next succeeding sections contained.

§ 4. All existing appropriations heretofore made by law, of portions of the said revenues in the preceding section mentioned, for terms of years which have not yet expired, shall continue to be made until the expiration of said terms of years, and not afterwards.

§ 5. The portion of the said revenues now directed by law to be annually paid over to the Literature fund shall be so paid in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven, and not afterwards; and after that period all existing specific appropriations now directed by law to be paid out of the revenues of the Literature fund, shall be paid out of the revenues in the said preceding third section mentioned, until otherwise ordered by the legislature.

The committee further report for the consideration of the Convention, and recommend to be submitted to the people separately, the following additional section.

§ 6. The legislature shall, at its first session after the adoption of this constitution, and from time to time thereafter as shall be necessary, provide by law for the free education and instruction of every child between the ages of four and sixteen years, whose parents, guardians or employers shall be resident of the state, in the common schools now established or which shall hereafter be established therein—the expense of such education and instruction, after applying the public funds as above provided, shall be defrayed by taxation at the same time, and in the same manner as may be provided by law for the liquidation of town and county charges.

HENRY NICOLL,
Chairman.

Communications.

[For the District School Journal.]

THE PRIMARY EDUCATION OF THE DEAF MUTE, PREVIOUS TO HIS ADMISSION INTO A DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION.

From the French, by Prof. J. ADDISON CAREY, of New York. *An extract from an article in the "Annales de l'education des Sourds-Muets et des Aveugles," by the Editor, Prof. Edward Morel, of the Royal Institution for deaf mutes. Paris, 1846.*

A child endowed with the faculty of hearing, develops and instructs himself with a remarkable facility. His education commences in the cradle, and continues without interruption to the moment when, having become a man, he enters upon his career. Scarcely has he left the bosom of his mother when he acquires the use of language without effort, thanks to the fortunate dependence in which his feebleness places him, thanks especially to his faculty of guessing, (*instinct de divination*), and his wonderful aptitude for imitation, precious gifts of nature which lose their original power, and become weaker in proportion as the child advances in years.

Every thing favors the instruction of the ordinary child. He is at all times the object of the care and attention of those who surround him; facts constantly explain oral expressions, and meanwhile his eyes see, his ears hear, and aided by this continual coincidence, his young mind easily interprets the meaning of words. If these direct and frequently repeated explanations enlighten his intellect, the indirect instruction which he receives is still more effective. Where is the father of a family who has not been more than once surprised at the correctness with which his little child has applied expressions which had never been used in addressing him, but which he had in some way gathered from the conversations which he had heard? Does not this phenomenon reveal to us a benevolent dispensation of Providence?

To the lessons of the mother, succeed the infant and primary schools, the college, the faculties, and, at last, the special schools which prepare the young man for his profession. In this ascending scale of intellectual development, each one stops at the point which is suited to his ability and his social position; his faculties are exercised and cultivated from the tenderest age to the time when he gives himself to his profession, so that his education embraces a period of fifteen or twenty years.

It is not thus with the poor deaf mute. No person gives his attention to him during the first years of infancy. For him there are no maternal lessons, no infant or primary schools. Deprived of all social communication, all intellectual aliment, he remains abandoned to himself. We have elsewhere remarked upon the sad consequences which such an abandonment, as cruel as it is unjust, exercises upon the heart and mind of a young deaf mute. This kind of seclusion is prolonged even to the age of ten or twelve years, and frequently to a more advanced age. It is then only that he enters a special institution, when indeed he is so happy as to obtain this privilege, for the coun-

try as yet distributes the bread of knowledge only to a small portion of these unfortunates; the others remain deprived of it during the whole course of their life.

When, after having passed the first years of life in isolation and idleness, some favored ones are admitted into an institution, six years are allowed for their education. This limited period, is all the time given the instructor for teaching them what children endowed with hearing, learn from the cradle up to the age of fifteen or twenty years; and yet he is obliged not only to contend against the difficulties presented by the peculiar infirmity of his pupils, but also to awaken the intellect, benumbed by long inactivity.

Suppose a child possessing every sense in perfection, but never having spoken, and, deprived of all social communication, had arrived also at the age of ten or twelve years without knowing how to speak; suppose that until that age we should not undertake to teach him his maternal language and develop his intellect, if we might, without any inhumanity by such an experiment, think you that this child would have the same aptitude for acquiring language as if he had heard the voice of his mother from the cradle? Certainly not. We may very easily convince ourselves how difficult it is by reflection, to supply the want of maternal instruction, in acquiring the use of a language when we are no longer guided by the instincts of early life.

Now the deaf mute finds himself in this position, and even in a position still more unfavorable. And this fact should not be lost sight of in estimating the results obtained in the education of the deaf and dumb; a fact which is too frequently forgotten by those who, never having experienced the difficulties of instruction wholly peculiar, judge of the results of it with an excessive serenity.

From what we have said it appears that in the actual state of things there is yet in the education of the deaf and dumb, one grand deficiency to be supplied. To abandon these poor children to their sad fate until the age of ten, twelve or fourteen years, is to increase still more, the difficulties of their education. It is then important to commence it at the earliest age, and not to permit the time which precedes their admission to an Institution to pass away in a stupid inaction.

But may this primary education be undertaken with any advantage by persons who have not made the art of instructing deaf mutes a special and profound study? Yes, parents themselves may commence the education of their deaf mute children, and from the moment that they are able they ought to do it. In fulfilling a sacred obligation that is imposed upon them by Providence, they prepare their children at the same time to profit still more from the instructions which will be given them afterwards in the institutions.

If the deaf mute in early infancy is too frequently left to himself, it is often owing to the unjust prejudices existing in the public mind in respect to his moral and intellectual condition: parents will not undertake a work which they believe to be unprofitable.

We have endeavored in another place to remove these unfortunate errors, by proving that deafness makes no alteration in the intellectual faculties themselves, that, on the contrary, it only slackens the development of them in the individual who is afflicted with this infirmity, because it deprives him of the habitual instrument of social communication; we have shown how nature supplies this want, by the language of signs and gestures, when the young deaf mute is the object of the care and sympathy of those who surround him. It is needless for us again to insist upon this point. Parents ought then, with confidence, to undertake the early training of their children who are deprived of hearing, without the fear of casting seed upon a sterile soil. Happy results will crown their efforts.

That which we require is no impossibility, since it has been realised in families more than once, and frequent proofs of it have come under our notice in the course of our long practice; for among the new pupils who enter his class, the instructor observes a great difference between those, who having the good fortune to belong to enlightened parents, have not ceased to be the objects of their tender solicitude, and those who have been given up to themselves by the carelessness of their parents.

[For the District School Journal.]
GEOGRAPHICAL DEFINITIONS.

MR. EDITOR:

Having experienced some of the "ills which a pedagogue's life is heir to," during eight years practice in waking up mind, I have thought you would not deem me querulous if I should find fault with some of our text books.

The great source of vexation to the teacher, and expense to the parent, is the innumerable and ever-changing variety of works upon the same subject which may be found in almost every school, but the most serious source of injury to the child, is the inaccuracies and false doctrines which these "thousand and one" authors inculcate.

The fact, that too many of our school books are written by those who barely "follow in the footsteps of their predecessors" without sufficient discrimination to detect the errors they copy, or without sufficient strength of character to combat for the truth when opposed by the errors of the multitude, calls loudly for redress from some quarter, and while I would not attempt to say what is right, I will in a few instances point out the wrong.

Some time since, in teaching Geography, I became so vexed with the frequent and gross inaccuracies which occurred, that I abandoned all the works then used in my school, and commenced a system of oral instruction, which I have since followed. But although I have discarded these works as teaching error, yet they will be taught as truth throughout the land by those who have not the time to correct errors, or the inclination to become apologists for the inaccuracies of others, and therefore I propose to say a few words to the public in general, and authors in particular, through the columns of your useful and invaluable journal, on the subject of Geography.

1. What is a Gulf or Bay?

Smith—“A part of the *sea* extending into the land.”

Olney—“A part of the *sea* extending into the land.”

Mitchell—“A part of the *sea* extending into the land.”

Morse—“A part of the *ocean, sea or lake* extending into the land.”

Neither of the first three authors scruple to use the names of Green Bay, Put-in-Bay, Great and Little Sodus Bays, Mexico Bay, &c., nor the last the names of Haverstraw Bay, Tappan Bay, &c., although in so doing they directly militate against their own definitions.

2. What is a Cape?

Smith—“A low point of land extending into the *sea or ocean*.”

Olney—“A point of land extending into the *sea*.”

Mitchell—“A point of land extending into the *sea*.”

Morse—“The end or point of land projecting into the *sea*, beyond the general line of the coast.”

Then such capes as Cape Alfred on the north shore of Lake Ontario, and Cape or Point Kee-waiwona, &c., cannot exist, or if they do exist, should be known by some other name. Can the definition be correct?

3. What is a Desert?

Smith—“Vast sandy plains, destitute of water and vegetation.”

Olney—“Vast sandy plains, destitute of vegetation.”

Mitchell—“Plains covered with sand, stones and gravel.”

Morse—“Large tract of sand or rock, where nothing will grow.”

All writers concur in representing the deserts of Africa as hilly, rocky, and in some parts, even mountainous; and the Great American Desert abounds in long, coarse grass; and still these writers do not accommodate their definitions “to suit the true state of the case.”

4. What is an Archipelago?

Smith—“A sea interspersed or set with numerous islands.”

Olney—“A sea filled with islands.”

Mitchell—“A sea filled with islands.”

Morse—“A sea filled with islands.”

Now neither of the above writers will contend that the Archipelagoes of Chonos or de la Madre de Dios, or the Columbian Archipelago, are *seas* filled, either wholly or in part, with islands; and if an Archipelago is a sea interspersed with islands, why are not the Adriatic, the western part of the Baltic, and the eastern part of the China Sea, called Archipelagoes?

5. What is a Strait?

Smith—“A narrow passage of water leading into some sea or bay from another.”

Olney—“A narrow passage of water leading into some sea, gulf or bay.”

Mitchell—“A narrow passage connecting different bodies of water.”

Morse—“A narrow passage between different bodies of water.”

What then unites the Pacific and Arctic Oceans at Behring's (strait or straits?) and

Lakes Michigan and Huron; and why are not the Rivers St. Lawrence, St. Francis, Sorelle, &c., straits, as they connect different bodies of water?

6. What is a Harbor or Haven?

Smith—“A small part of the *sea* nearly surrounded by land, where ships may lie in safety.”

Olney—“A small part of the *sea* almost surrounded by land, where ships may lie in safety.”

Mitchell—“A small bay where vessels may remain at anchor in safety.”

Morse—“A small bay so encircled by land as to be protected from the wind and swell of the *sea*, where ships may anchor with safety.”

Then there cannot be such a place as Buffalo Harbor, Kingston Harbor or Toronto Harbor.

7. What is a Sea?

Smith—“A large body of water mostly surrounded by land.”

Olney—“A large collection of salt water mostly surrounded by land.”

Mitchell—“A collection of water smaller than an ocean and surrounded by land.”

Morse—“A large collection of salt water nearly enclosed by land.”

Why make any distinction in definition between a sea, gulf and bay? What particulars distinguish the Bay of Bengal from the Arabian Sea, that one should be called a bay and the other a sea?

The above extracts I have taken from the first dozen pages of the works mentioned, and I presume the remaining parts are equally objectionable. But may they not be corrected, and the Science of Geography reduced to something like mathematical precision? But enough for the present.

EDWARD W. CHESEBRO.

Official.

APPEALS TO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS.

The several County Superintendents are hereby directed to include in their annual report to the department for the present year, the number of appeals heard and decided by them, since the first day of October last.

N. S. BENTON, *Sup't.*

Miscellaneous.

THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE.

Although the events of our lives appear in the retrospect naturally connected with each other, yet if we compare two widely distant periods of the past, we sha'l often find them so discordant as to excite our surprise that the same being should have been placed in circumstances so essentially dissimilar. And if we could foresee some of the circumstances of our future lives, it would frequently appear quite out of the limit of possibility that we should be brought into them. Our present state would seem so full of insurmountable obstacles to such a change, that we could not form a con-

lecture by what instrumentality it was to be effected ; we could not conceive how the current of our destiny was to be so strangely diverted from its original course, nor how the barriers, which circumscribe our condition were to be so entirely overthrown. But time gradually elaborates apparently impossibilities into very natural and consistent events. A friend is lost by death ; a rival is removed from the sphere of competition ; a superior falls and leaves a vacancy in society to be filled up ; a series of events renders a measure advisable, of which a few years before we never dreamed ; new circumstances bring around us new persons ; novel connections open fresh prospects ; objects before unknown excite passions before dormant, and rouse talents of which we were scarcely conscious ; and our whole ideas and feelings varying and keeping pace with these revolutions, we are at length brought quite naturally into the very condition, which, a few years ago seemed utterly irreconcileable with our position in the world, and our relations to society. Many circumstances of our lives would appear like dreams, if we were abruptly thrown into them, without perceiving the succession of events by which we came there. We should feel like the poor man in the Arabian Tales, who, while under the influence of a sleeping draught, was divested of his clothes, and attired like prince, and on awaking was strangely perplexed to find himself surrounded by all the outward appendages of royalty, and by a crowd of attendants who treated him as their monarch. It is the gradual development of events, their connection and dependence on each other, and the corresponding changes in our views, which give the character of reality to actual life, as they confer it on the fictions of imagination. A succession of trivial changes carries the mind without abruptness to a wide distance from its former station, as a staircase conducts us to a lofty eminence by a series of minute elevations. Hence it is that men seldom suffer those extreme sensations from a change of circumstances which we are sometimes led to expect.

Persons in low life are apt to think that the splendor, to which a man of their own class has raised himself by industry and talents, must teem with uninterrupted enjoyment ; that the contrast of his former lowliness with his present elevation must be a perennial spring of pleasurable emotion. It may indeed occasionally yield him gratifying reflections, but it is seldom in his power to feel the full force of the difference. It is not in nature that at one and the same time he should feel ardent admiration of splendor and familiarity with it ; the panting desire for an object and the satisfied sense of enjoyment. He cannot combine at the same moment the possession of the feelings of two remote periods of his life, so as alternately to pass from one to the other and revel in the full rapture of the contrast. No power of imagination can present him at once with two vivid landscapes of his mental condition at two different junctures, so as to enable him to bring into distinct comparison all their lights and shades and colors. The hand of time has been constantly at work to wear out the impression

of his past existence. While he has been led from one vicissitude to another, from one state of mind to a different state, almost all the peculiarities of his original views and feelings have been successively dropped in his progress, till it has been an effort, if not an impossibility, to recollect them with any sort of clearness and precision.

The same revolution of feeling takes place when a man sinks into adversity, although memory perhaps is then more active and tenacious. A wonder is sometimes expressed, that one who has been unfortunate in the world should be able to retain so much cheerfulness amidst the recollection of former times, which must press on his mind ; times when friends thronged round him, when every eye seemed to greet him with pleasure, and every object to share his satisfaction. Now, destitute, forsaken, obscure, how is it that he is not overpowered by the contrast ? There are moments, it cannot be doubted, when he acutely feels the transition, but this cannot be the ordinary state of his mind. Many of his views having been displaced by others, his feelings having gradually conformed to his circumstances, and his attention being occupied by present objects, he has not that oppressive habitual sense of the change, which a mere looker-on is apt to suppose. An indifferent observer, indeed, is often more powerfully struck with the contrast than the subject of it, not having to look at the former state through all the intermediate ideas and emotions, and being occupied only with the difference in external appearances. He contrasts (if we may refer to our former figure) only the base and summit of the tower, while the staircase which connects them is concealed from view.

It is certain that men frequently bear calamities much better than they themselves would have previously expected. In misfortunes which are of gradual growth, every change contracts and reduces their views, and prepares them for another ; and they at length find themselves involved in adversity without any violent transition. How many there have been, who, while basking in the smiles of fortune, and revelling in the luxuries of opulence, would have been completely overpowered by a revelation of their future doom ; yet when the vicissitudes of life have brought them into those circumstances, they have met their misfortunes with calmness and resignation. The records of the French Revolution abound with instances of extraordinary fortitude in those from whom it could have been least expected, and who, a few years before, would probably have shrunk with horror from the bare imagination of their own fate. Women, as well as men, were seen to perish on the scaffold without betraying the least symptom of fear.

Even when calamity suddenly assails us, it is remarkable how soon we become familiarized with our novel situation. After the agony of the first shock has subsided, the mind seems to relinquish its hold on its former pleasures—to call in its affections from the various objects on which they fixed themselves and to endeavor to concentrate them on the few solaces remaining. By the force of perpetual and intense rumina-

tion, the rugged and broken path, by which the imagination passes from its present to its former state, it is worn smooth and rendered continuous; and the aspect of surrounding objects becoming familiar, loses half the horror lent to it by the first agitated survey.

If this be true, that men in general bear calamities much better than they themselves would have expected, and that affliction brings along with it a portion of its own antidote, it is a fact which may serve to cheer us in that hour of gloomy anticipation. To reflect that what would be agony to us in our present state of mind, with our present views, feelings and associations, may at a future time prove a very tolerable evil, because the state of our mind will be different; that in the greatest misfortunes which may befall us, we shall probably possess sufficient strength and equanimity to bear the burden of our calamities, may be of some use in dispelling those melancholy forebodings which are too apt to disturb the short period of life. It may lead to more cheerful views of human existence. There are few men of reflection to whose minds the fragility of human happiness has not been forcibly suggested by the very instances in which that happiness appears in its brightest colors. They have hung over it as over the early floweret of spring, which the next blast may destroy. As the lovely bride, blooming with health and animated with love and hope, has passed by in the day of her triumph, they have contrasted the transitory happiness of the hour with the long train of disappointments and calamities, diseases and deaths, with which the most fortunate life is familiar, and many of which inevitably spring from the event which the beautiful creature before them, unconscious of all but the immediate prospect, is welcoming with a heart full of happiness and a countenance radiant with smiles. She seems a victim on whom a momentary illumination has fallen only to be followed by deeper gloom. "Ah!" said a poor emaciated but still youthful woman, as she was standing at the door of her cottage, while a gay bridal party were returning from church, "they little think what they are about. I was left a widow with two children at the age of twenty-one."

It was in the same spirit that Gray wrote his ode on the Prospect of Eton College. After describing the sports of the school-boys in strains familiar to every reader, he makes a natural and beautiful transition to their future destiny.

Alas! regardless of their doom,
The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond to-day;
Yet see how all around them wait
The ministers of human fate,
And black misfortunes baleful train,
Ah! slow them where in ambush stand,
To seize their prey, the murd'rous band,
Ah! tell them they are men!

In the indulgence of such reflections, however, it is to be remembered that we are contrasting distant events of life, bringing together extreme situations, of which to pass suddenly from one to the other might be intolerable anguish, and that we are suppressing all the cir-

cumstances which lie between, and prepare a comparatively easy and gradual transition.

It is evident, from the tenor of the preceding observations, that most of the intense pleasures and poignant sorrows of mankind must be experienced in passing from one condition to another, not in any permanent state; and that the intensity of the feelings will materially depend on the suddenness of the change.

On comparing the condition of a peasant and a peer, we cannot perhaps perceive much superiority of happiness in either. The ideas and feelings of the peasant are adjusted to the circumstances by which he is surrounded, and the coarseness of his fare, and the homeliness of his dwelling, excite no emotions of uneasiness. The notions of the peer are equally well adjusted to the pomp and refinements of rank and affluence. Luxurious dainties and splendid decorations, courteous deference and vulgar homage are too familiar to raise any peculiar emotions of pleasure. But if a poor man rises to affluence, or a rich man sinks into poverty, such circumstances are no longer neutral.

The former feels delight in his new acquisitions, and the latter is pained by the want of habitual luxuries and accustomed splendor. In the same manner that a substance may feel cold to one hand and warm to another, according to the different temperatures to which they have been antecedently exposed, so any rank or situation in life may yield pleasure or pain according to the previous condition of the person who is placed in it.

Hence we may perceive the error of such moralists as contend that fame, wealth, power, or any other acquisition is not worth pursuit because those who are in possession of it, are not happier than their fellow creatures. They may not indeed be happier, but this by no means proves that the object is not worth pursuing, since there may be much pleasure not only in the chase, but in the novelty of the acquisition. The fortune which a man acquires by some successful effort may not, after a while, afford him more gratification than his former moderate competence; but in order to estimate its value, we must take into account all the pleasurable emotions which would flow in upon him until a perfect familiarity has established itself in his mind.

Such moralists seem to forget, that man, "by the necessity of his nature, must have some end which he can pursue with ardor; that to be without aim and object is to be miserable; that the necessary business of life requires, on the part of many, an ardent aspiration after wealth, power and reputation; that it is not the pursuits themselves, but the vices with which they may be connected, that are the proper objects of reprobation. It is, in fact, by yielding to the passions and principles of his constitution, within proper limits, and under proper restrictions, not by the vain attempt to suppress them, that man promotes the happiness of himself and society.—*Essays on the formation, &c., of character.*

"O! LORD, HOW MANIFOLD ARE THY WORKS!"

It is but a few years since we all began to be. The days of infancy and childhood are still fresh, in memory. Recall for a moment the impressions then made by a survey of the works of God. How limited our views! How contracted the most enlarged conceptions! The few inmates of our father's house, the inhabitants of the neighborhood where we were born, and an occasional stranger, were to us the world of mankind. The circle that appeared to bound the earth and the sky, was to us the first limit of the material universe. Every thing was new, and filled us with wonder. As we have increased in stature, we have also increased in knowledge, the limits of which have been daily extending. The flat surface of earth, of but few miles in extent, upon which the concave vault of the heavens appear to rest, has become enlarged into a round world of great magnitude, covered with oceans and seas, continents and islands, tranquil lakes and flowing rivers,—clothed with vegetation and animated with life in all its infinite degrees and modes of being. Into whatever department of knowledge we have entered, at first it appeared limited, and in a few days we thought to grasp the whole subject, in all its extent. But like the circle of the horizon, it appeared to enlarge as we rose up to survey its extent, and the limits appeared to widen and recede as we attempted to attain them by pursuit. The common earth on which we tread, and the few kinds of stones, and the rocks so vile and worthless, that fell under our view, were to us, at first, the whole of the mineral kingdom of nature; which as we enter and attempt to survey its limits, opens into a field of unmeasured extent and boundless variety, for the knowledge of which the whole of life is inadequate. The few trees, plants, and flowers of the garden, were the first specimens, and to us, then, the whole vegetable world, which, as we advance in the knowledge of it, opens on the view in such unlimited extent, richness, magnificence and variety, and the few beasts, birds, reptiles and insects, which at first fell under our observation, were to us the whole animal kingdom; each department of which has continued to widen so immeasurably as we have advanced. As the limits of our knowledge have extended, and as we have become more acute and refined in our observations, and with philosophic eyes began to

"Look through this air, this ocean, and this earth," we have found that all

"Matter is quick, and bursting into birth,
Above, how high progressive thought may go,
Around, how wide, how deep extend below!"

We turn our attention to the heavens over our head. The concave vault which appeared so near, and which we first thought bounded the universe, is discovered to be only an illusion of the sight, and as a real existence it becomes annihilated by science. The sun, that glorious orb of day, instead of the flat circular disc it appears, of a few inches in extent, and apparently near to the earth, is disclosed by science to be a round body, nearly a million and a half times the size of the earth!—a magnitude which baffles all our attempts to conceive of. But if its magnitude fill us with wonder, no less does the constant energy, and the all pervading extent of the force and power of its action, constantly imparting such a degree of light, heat and vital energy, and attraction to all the planetary bodies, which revolve around the sun as their centre of motion, and as the seat of all their light and life.

And the earth on which we dwell, we find to be but one only, among a numerous family of worlds,

differing in magnitude, but all depending as children, on the same great common parent, for the light, life, animation and powers of motion; and reasoning from analogy, where observations stop, we are led to the conclusion, that they also, must be covered with vegetation, and peopled with life, as well as the one we inhabit. Could our minds but be enlarged so that we might rise above the narrow world of mere sensible appearances, into which we are born, and take in an intellectual view of this whole system of worlds as they exist in reality—and standing at the sun, as the point of observation, the grand centre of the system—were our sense but enlarged to see and to perceive these numerous worlds scattered at various distances through space, all revolving with such inconceivable velocity, in the same direction, around the one great centre of the whole, all turning on their axis of motion, and alternately exposing their broad hemispheres to his rays of light and heat; giving the alternation of day and night, summer and winter, to them all, how involuntary must be our exclamation, "O Lord! how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all!" But even then should we have scarcely entered the threshold of the great world of reality, as it is disclosed by natural science. This will appear, if we for a moment consider the *fixed stars* which bestud the firmament of Heaven. In a clear and still night, favorable for observation, you may count more than one thousand stars, seen by the naked eye. The same number may be seen from the opposite part of the earth, in the other hemisphere of Heaven. We take the telescope, the number increases; we use a more powerful glass, and the number is proportionally increased; we attempt to see the utmost limits of creation, by increasing our powers of sight to the utmost that human ingenuity can invent, but we seem to make no progress towards arriving at the limits of the created universe; for the number of fixed stars constantly increases with the magnifying powers of the glass that we use. And it is demonstrable, that if our sun, with its whole system of planetary worlds was removed to the distance—to the nearest possible distance of the nearest fixed star, it would dwindle to a point, and no powers of the telescope would increase its apparent size. It would appear with the largest glass no larger than a fixed star appears to us—a sparkling, brilliant point. We reason, therefore, from the immensity of their distance, and from the intensity of their light, that these stars are self-luminous bodies, and of a physical constitution and magnitude, not unlike the sun of our system. And if suns like ours, we cannot stop here; we are led on by analogy to infer that they were created for use—that like the sun of our system, each one is the centre of a system of its own, having planetary worlds like our own revolving around it. And if these planetary worlds are like ours, covered with vegetation, and animated and peopled with life, with rational and moral beings, like men, at their head, as from analogy we are led to conclude, how vast, how infinite, is the created universe of God! The mind, with its present powers of conception, is lost and overpowered in the greatness of the subject. And well may we exclaim, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him?"

Reflections like these, as our minds are directed into the opening vista of the works of our Creator, at first fill us with a sense of our own littleness and insignificance, and prompt the feelings of hu-

mility and self annihilation. For what is man, in all his pride and greatness—what is the earth on which we dwell, with all its inhabitants—or what is even the whole system to which the earth belongs, when viewed in comparison with the whole universe of creation?

If such, however, were the only impressions left on the mind by such reflections, they would do us but little good, since they would have no tendency to develop those faculties of the mind which would fit us for better discharging the duties of life. But these reflections, in every well regulated and serious mind, will soon be followed by feelings of wonder and delight, that a being so short-lived, of such feeble strength as man, is possessed of such powers of mind as man,—capable of such development, growth and enlargement,—capable of making such rapid progress in knowledge—so that in the space of a few years, he can advance so far from the mere empty and blank state of infancy, and arrive at such a degree of knowledge, not only of this earth and its inhabitants, but of bodies so distant from him, that he can ascertain the laws which govern them, calculate their distances, measure their magnitudes, be able to foretell the changes and revolutions to which they will be subject, hundreds or even thousands of years before they will take place!

Though the first feelings are those of wonder and self-annihilation, yet these must be followed by a true and enlightened self-respect, by a sense, indeed, of our own nothingness, when compared with Him who is infinite in all his perfections; yet with a consciousness of the worth and the value of those god-like powers and capacities with which He has endowed the human mind—that capacity for indefinite growth and expansion, of seeing, of enjoying, the infinite wisdom and goodness which He has displayed and manifested in all His works. It is by reflections like these, that man cannot but be more deeply penetrated with the true spirit of self-respect; if not what man is, at least of what he is *designed* to be, and has capacities to become. For he sees that he is possessed of powers capable of unlimited expansion. The more the mind knows, the more it seems capable of knowing: And the objects of knowledge, too, appear to increase in number and extent, just in the ratio of his power to understand them; so that should the longest life be spent in the ardor of pursuit, and increased pleasure at every step of the progress, yet the world of knowledge before the mind, would appear as inexhaustible to the state then, as it appears to the unexpanded mind at the age of childhood. What it will have attained, compared with what is yet *before it*, is what finite is compared to the infinite!

We have spoken only of the *natural* understanding of man, and of the *natural* world, as the means of cultivating its powers, by what is adapted to his senses, and through them, to his reason: But if such is the capability of man for the attainment of *intellectual* growth and enlargement, he has equal and corresponding powers and capacities for *moral* improvement and advancement. The moral and active powers, or the *affections of the heart*, are susceptible of a degree of expansion and improvement, corresponding to the improvement of the understanding in knowledge. They are created to act together, to mutually and reciprocally aid each other's advancement: the understanding, by moral and spiritual truth to enlighten and direct the affections; the affections to stimulate, give warmth and energy to the thoughts and perceptions of the understanding. So that the true order of man's progress, in the development of his power, would be the enlightening of the under-

standing in natural, moral and spiritual knowledge, to correct the errors of sense, to govern and direct the natural appetites, passions and affections, so as to keep the *animal* in subjection to the *intellectual* part of the nature, and the *intellectual* to the *moral affections of benevolence and love*.

We have spoken of the *natural* world as the means of intellectual improvement. Our limits will not permit, at this time, of entering upon the subject of *moral* and *spiritual* truth, of stating even in the same general manner what we learn by revelation of the character and attributes of the great Creator himself, the relation of our own minds to Him, and the love of moral and spiritual life, or what is revealed of the mode of man's existence beyond the grave. But suffice it here to remark, that where the natural reason of man hesitates, and goes no farther, revelation comes to his aid, and assures him, that though he is frail, and his life here is short, yet that his life here is only the commencement of his existence, shows him his connexion with the life to come, opens before him the gates of immortality, and divests death of its sting, by assuring him that any good thing acquired in this state, will not be lost; but that the work which was rightly begun here, will not be annihilated with the dissolution of the body, but continue to go on, increasing in intellectual greatness, and moral perfection and beauty hereafter: that when divested of the body and its senses, which his connexion with the natural world rendered a necessary instrument and organ of communication, the soul, disciplined by the state of past trial, and the rudiments of knowledge acquired, is designed to enter upon another scene of existence, with increased powers and capacities for growth and enlargement, when free from the grossness and the confinement of the natural senses, and the associations with depravity to which it is here subject, it will imbibe knowledge with a keener relish, with more perfect means of acquisition, and may go on for ever approximating (but without ever attaining to) the standard of Him who is perfect in all his attributes.

"O! Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all. Surely the earth is filled with thy riches!"

H. A. W.

Poetry.

CHANGE.

From the New-York Organ.

Rolling, rolling, ever rolling;
So the ages sweep along;
Time his bell is ever tolling
O'er the beautiful and strong!
Roll the seasons, fade the summer,
Melting soon in Autumn's gloom;
The wild tempests—sons of Winter,
Hurry nature to her tomb.
Comes the spring-time—breezes softest
Re-awake Earth's dormant powers,
Brighter verdure clothes the forest,
Song re-wakes in rosy bowers.
Man, too, changes! his joys feeling,
Oft they're whelm'd by sorrow's wave;
Now he's singing—now he's weeping;
Thus he hastens to his grave.
Golden visions—Hopes the sweetest,
Gild his life with one soft ray;
Baseless rainbows! Night fires fleetest!
Dim they shine, then fade away.
In deep sadness, grief and sorrow,
Peace I see; I pray for rest;
Holy Father: may the morrow
Tranquillize my anxious breast.
Look I upward through life's portal,
Deathless flowers bloom there for me;
Loves unbroken; Joys eternal;
Hope, up-springing endlessly.

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